

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2010



Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chair
Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Isenberg and Members of the Delta Stewardship Council:

I respectfully request a review and recommendations on evaluation of the operation of the Delta Cross Channel on migrating Fall Chinook salmon.

Constituents in California have expressed concern over the operation of the Delta Cross Channel gates during the Fall Chinook migration period. Discussions with the Bureau of Reclamation and other Federal agencies have yielded little direct knowledge on how to evaluate the impacts from keeping the gates open or closed during the migration season. It is my desire that decisions related to the operation of the Delta Cross Channel gates be based on scientifically credible data and analysis.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Delta Stewardship Council review the existing approach that the DWR and Bureau of Reclamation use in determining operations at the Delta Cross Channel and identify the elements that should be included in a scientifically rigorous approach to evaluation. Specifically:

- The primary question: Will the closure of the Delta Cross Channel Gates for two weeks in October significantly increase the number of Fall Chinook salmon reaching the Mokulumne River Hatchery at the base of Comanche Dam?
- Based on the use of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) DSM2 flow operations model, what components of the model should be tested to evaluate the ability of the model to address biological responses and sensitivity to water quality and quantity?
- The following questions have been asked:
 - Does closure of the Delta Cross Channel gates affect the ability for Fall Chinook salmon to reach the Mokulumne River Hatchery?
 - What range in the number of days would the Delta Cross Channel gates need to be closed under a high, average and low water year (as defined by DWR) to ensure that at a minimum 5,000 Fall Chinook salmon are able to reach the Mokulumne River Hatchery?
 - What data should be collected to evaluate whether the closure and opening of the Delta Cross Channel gates affects the ability of the Fall Chinook to migrate to the Mokulumne River Hatchery?

- What data should be collected to evaluate the impact of the closure and opening of the Delta Cross Channel gates on the water quality at the State Water Project and Central Valley Project pumps?
- What approach should be used to evaluate whether the Department of Water Resources DSM2 model is sensitive enough to address water delivery volumes and quality to the SWP and CVP pumps?
- Can the DSM2 model be used to evaluate the impact of providing additional water quantity from the upper Mokelumne River to the lower Mokelumne River?

It is my hope that your initial review will provide a framework that the Bureau of Reclamation can utilize to develop a scientifically based assessment of the potential for closure in 2011 of the Delta Cross Channel gates for longer than two days.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Grace F. Napolitano

Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Water and Power